

Slip-bobber Secrets: Refine your Approach for more Walleyes



so our bobber is just about 1-1/2 inches above the water. The deep fish cannot feel the bobber when pulled under the surface. If we are in current, the spacing of the weights will slow our drift.

Fishing in the weeds may require precision placement of the bobber, as the fish can be tightly grouped in a small area of the weeds, usually the thickest section. Sometimes adding additional color to your line helps create a strike. Adding different colored slipknots to the line, with some extra line sticking out from each side of the knots, will wiggle around and attract more strikes. This works.

The size of our slip-bobber depends on how much weight we are using; if we are using traditional slip-bobbers (4 inches tall), we like weighting them so the bobber is halfway under water. If we are fishing in windy conditions and drifting, we may switch to a tall, 10-inch pencil bobber. This bobber has much less wind resistance and moves slowly even when windy. However, it is difficult to cast.

When fishing deep rock bars, humps, woodpiles or deep flats, we again place our weights about 12 inches apart and use up to four or five at a time. By placing a bigger weight at the bottom and top, and smaller weights in the middle, the live bait will not entangle. The system drops down

Using a slip-bobber over a deep rock hump produced this walleye.

story continued...

by John Andrew

Fishing for walleyes is done with several approaches such as muskie fishing. There are several lures and techniques used and multiple methods. Using live bait is also very common. In this article, we are going to discuss the use of the slip bobber with live bait for the elusive walleye.

Throughout several Midwestern states, the walleye is a very sought after game fish, not only for their fine table fare but also for the challenge of catching them, which at certain times of the year can be very tricky. Using a 4- to 8-pound equivalent superline is important, in my opinion, because this line slips through the bobber with little or no resistance, the days of line twist have been over for years and years. Using a fluorocarbon leader is also good.

Using a leader is very critical to our success. There are times when we are slow drifting along a tapering drop from a long, extended point and the walleyes are four feet off the bottom. They are not always related just to the bottom, as we will

discuss further in this article. This approach is best used on a little to no-wind situation when fishing a long, tapering underwater point (yes, you can use a lindy rig or bottom bouncer). We like the slip-bobber because we can put the bait directly in front of the fish without guessing where our bait is in conjunction with no abrupt movement such as jiggling, casting and rigging creates.




Ok, so now what? Well, it's easy. On most calm, still days, it's sunny or close to it. The fish are spooky, as most species are during these conditions.

A smaller #1 colored Drop Shot hook is ideal for this situation. Just the hook is used; no other part of the drop shot configuration is used. The shape of this hook is critical to your high percentage of hook ups; we are at 90 percent. Try them; they work. The color of this hook can help in the amount of strikes you receive.

The weight system (for us) is as follows. It depends on wind conditions, depth, current, and if we are in trees or weeds. If we are working in water deeper than 10 feet or if we are in current, we like to place our weights about 12 inches apart



This walleye was caught while slow drifting a deep mud flat and using a slip-bobber.

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Here-a-Dap, There-a-Dap, Everywhere-a-Dap-Dap

by Doug Thalacker

It's time for several things to happen to the technique of 'dap fishing' or 'dapping.' The first thing to do is to bring it across the ocean from England and to our banks, literally. Secondly, it needs to be wrest away from the all high and mighty hands of fly fishermen. Just because fly fishing uses flies, doesn't make it the exclusive domain of our wet-legged brethren. And third, it should be demystified from highly specialized techniques to ones that everyone can put into his/her arsenal for catching fish.

The British Isles usually take credit for inventing fly-fishing, but I'm guessing that it was at least co-invented here in the Americas. Dapping is probably one of the first methods invented for catching fish with a pole and line. My hypothesis is that dapping was one of the first forms of line-and-pole fishing. Noodling was probably the first method for catching fish, with spearing a close second. Being very observant, these ancient people certainly noticed insects flitting just over and on the surface of water and saw fish rising to slurp them down. Some rocket scientist of the day figured out that if he/she attached a 'line'—let's say, made of thinly stretched animal gut—to a long branch or stem most likely made of a willow or cane, and tied a small feather to the end of the line, it would imitate those dancing insects.

Let's tackle the first and third items together. Dapping uses flies, but there is no casting involved. It is also an effective technique to fish for species other than trout, so you don't have to drive hundreds of miles to trout streams to practice it.

Catching those Slip-bobber...

...continued from previous page

to the desired depth.

Using minnows works well for a slip bobber. We like using a larger chub minnow on the bobber. Most species of fish like a big meal especially if they do not have to chase after it. The slip-bobber works very, very well for this. Also, the bigger minnow continuously moves and swims around, attracting bigger game fish. Using a nightcrawler hooked onto the slip bobber works well when drifting the mud flats or on the bottom of the weed beds.

Leeches are very productive in many locations. When we are fishing deep or shallow wood structure, they can be bumped along the branches. The leech does not pull free from the hook. When on top of rock piles, they work well. The walleyes gorge themselves on leeches when they are utilizing this location. In fact, most locations are good for leeches. Slip bobbers work very well throughout the year, especially during the warmer water temperatures. Pulling plastic baits under a slip-bobber works well also and again, during warmer water temperatures.

Setting up a slip-bobber rig is very simple. We start with a slipknot, which can be purchased at most sporting good stores or bait shops. This knot is pre-tied to a small section of a straw. You slide your line through the straw and push the pre-tied knot onto your line. Pull the two tag ends tight so the knot tightens to your line.

Slide the small piece of straw off and then slide your line into the top of a slip bobber and out the bottom of the slip bobber. Then tie your hook on and add some weight above your hook to pull the bait down. You simply slide the knot up or down the line to your desired depth you wish to fish, easy. Now let's go get 'em.

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River or lake, boat, shore, or wet-to-your-waist, it is an effective method, especially in places where fly-casting could never put a fly. I said earlier that many people have dismissed dapping in the past, because dapping is pretty much using a cane pole and fishing with a short line. In a nutshell, it is dangling a fly on or just above the surface, imitating one of the many aquatic insects that breed by laying their eggs on the surface of water—mayflies and damselflies are two examples.

The equipment you need is simple. A 10- to 13-foot fly rod or crappie rod is good, but a 14- to 18-foot extension pole also works well. If you are going after big fish that might make long runs, a fly rod with 10 feet of backing would work. Most of my dapping is with a 12- to 16-foot extension pole, and the flex of these long poles is enough to easily fight and land a three- to four-pound fish. The only caveat with long poles is their weight. The pole should be light enough to control with one hand. There is special line called dapping floss that can be used, or I like any of the super lines since they are very thin compared to the breaking strength. You will need to experiment with the length of line, but a short 6- to 8-foot length is long enough not to spook the fish with the pole and short enough to control what the fly is doing.

The basic idea is to let your fly dance on the top or just above the water, letting as little of the line touch as possible. Take some time to watch mayflies, damselflies and dragonflies when the female is depositing eggs on the surface. They generally flit within inches of the surface either dropping their eggs or dipping their abdomen into the water. Sometimes the male (damsel) will still be attached near the head of the female. Female mayflies tend to sit on the surface when depositing eggs. This is the behavior that dapping is intended to imitate.

Dapping floss is using a flat line that looks much like overly large dental floss. The idea behind this floss is that it will more easily catch the wind and give a more natural flitting action. I have tried it and understand the idea but have not had much success with it. You might have to research a European supplier such as SportFish (a UK supplier) or Amazon.uk for a good selection of dapping floss.

The traditional dry flies to use for dapping are the same ones used for trout: the Royal Coachman, the Adams, the Quills and the Duns. Remember that this technique can and should be used for panfish, bass and any other fish that can be found in shallow areas, so any dry fly imitation will work.

Terrestrial insects mistakenly land or fall in water and become tasty prey for fish. So using ant and grasshopper imitators (they're easy to tie) will work well between the various hatches. The natural colors are grays, tans and browns, but I have had lots of success with yellows and reds with white wings. I like these colors since they are more visible to my aging eyes. A big advantage of dapping over fly casting, especially for the non fly fisher, is that you can use size 16, 18 and even 20s on 1- or 2-pound line with little trouble and to great effect. Another

advantage is that you can place flies in spots that would be totally inaccessible by casting, like heavily brushed shorelines or reed beds.

Some stealth is required since you are very close to the fish. Muted clothing and a low profile keep fish from easily spotting you. Slow, quiet movements, either from boat, shore or wading, also help. Good polarized sunglasses help since dapping works best when sight-fishing. This is not a run-and-gun technique like baitcasting, and is a truly (dare I say use this overused word?) finesse technique.

My dad taught me dapping with a cane pole as my first fishing technique, even though he didn't know it at the time. He was probably tired of removing hooks from various body parts as a result of wayward casts and instead showed me how to dangle a worm right above a fish. The fly fishers have tried to keep dapping their secret (as they do with so many good fishing techniques), but it is time for it to go mainstream (pun intended). It is not for every fishing situation or species of fish, but you already have most of the equipment. All you have to do is a little adaptation, and with a short learning curve, you will be catching dapped fish.

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